



Is Populism Popular?

How Canadians feel about “populism”
and other political labels

December 2025

pollara
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Methodology

Field Window	October 11 to 20, 2025
Sampling	Online survey of randomly-selected sample of 2,702 adult (18+) Canadians. Sample source is a mix of the Dynata and Leger online panels.
Reliability*	Online surveys cannot be assigned a margin of error. As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of $\pm 1.9\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is larger for sub-segments.
Weighting	Data has been weighted using the most current gender, age, & region Census data, to ensure the sample reflects the actual population of adult Canadians.
Research standards	Pollara Strategic Insights is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC), and this research was conducted in compliance with CRIC standards.
Tracking	Some questions have been tracked against an October 2022 online survey by Pollara, among n=3,418 adult Canadians.

REGION	Number of Interviews (unweighted)	Margin of error*
Atlantic Canada	250	$\pm 7.4\%$
Quebec	650	$\pm 3.9\%$
Ontario	900	$\pm 3.0\%$
Saskatchewan/ Manitoba	301	$\pm 7.3\%$
Alberta	301	$\pm 5.6\%$
British Columbia	300	$\pm 5.1\%$
CANADA	2,702	$\pm 1.9\%$



22%

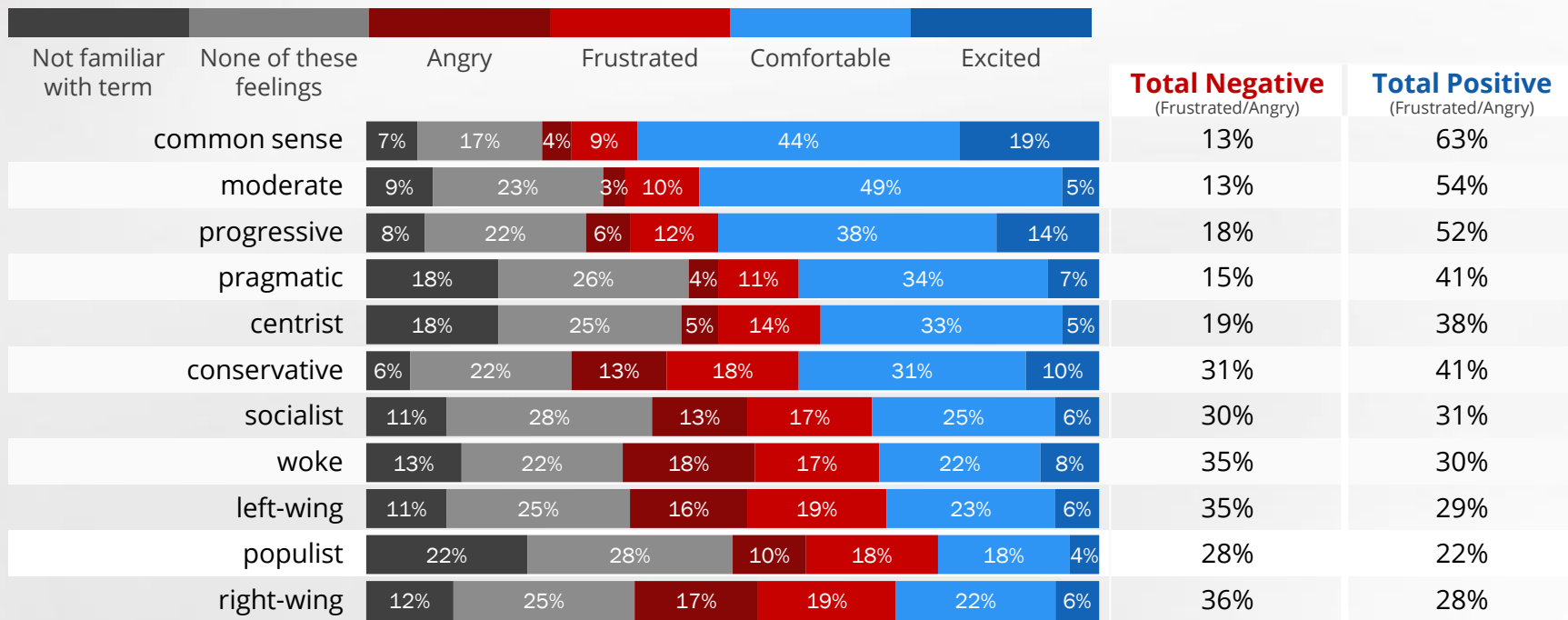
of Canadians feel generally positive about “populist” politicians, while 28% feel generally negative

Key Findings

- Canadians are generally comfortable with politicians who describe themselves as “common sense”, “moderate”, “progressive”, and “pragmatic”.
- The term “populist” is not readily understood, with only half of Canadians able to say how they feel about “populist” politicians.
 - Those familiar with the concept skew more negative than positive, but many populist principles resonate in isolation.
- Terms more readily associated with conservative politicians resonate more today than they did three years ago. Net sentiment towards “conservative” has swung up 19 points, with “populist” up a net of 13 points, and “right wing” up a net of 14 points.
- Young people are more open to many labels that older voters find polarizing like “socialist”, “woke”, and “populist”.
 - At the same time, young people are drawn less to more mainstream labels like “moderate”, “pragmatic”, and “centrist”.

Political Philosophies: “Common sense” and “progressive” are labels that excite the largest share of voters

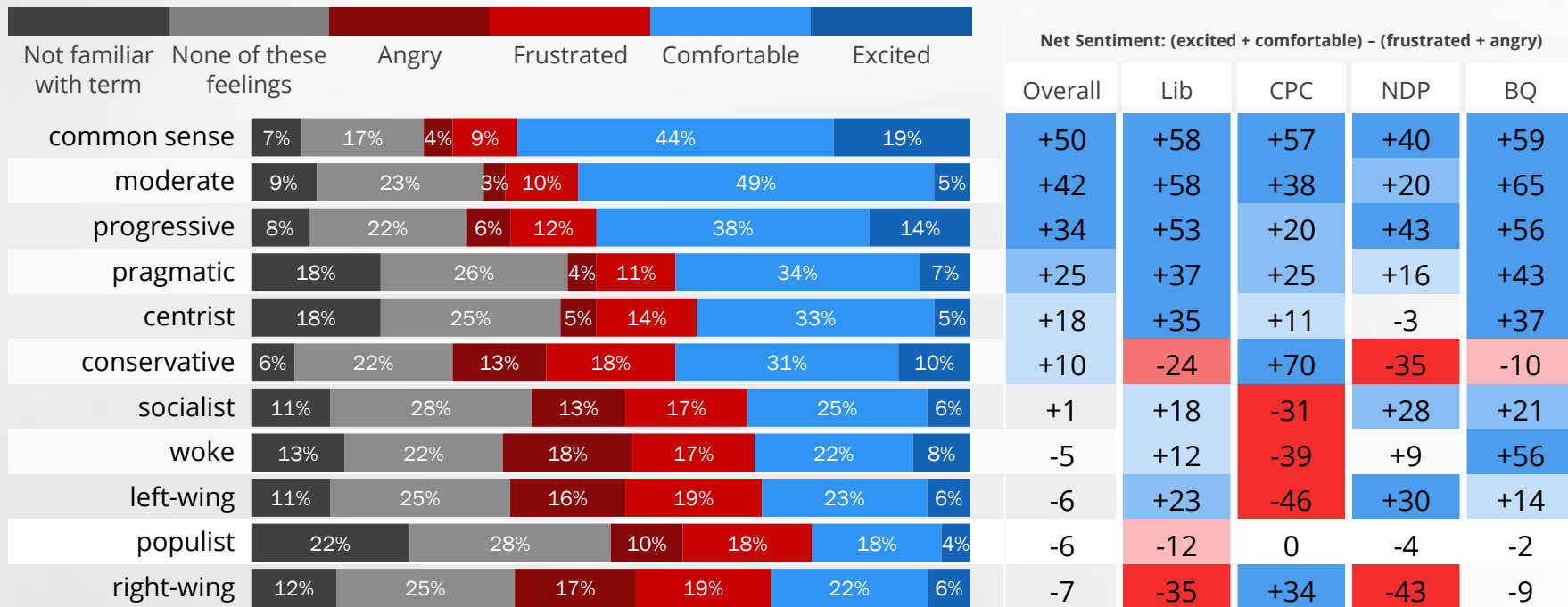
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Q The following are words people sometimes use to describe politicians. Generally speaking, how do you feel when you think about these types of politicians?
 BASE: All Respondents (n=2,702)

Political Philosophies – by Vote Intent: Net positive sentiment across political spectrum for “common sense”, “moderate”, “progressive”, and “pragmatic” leaders

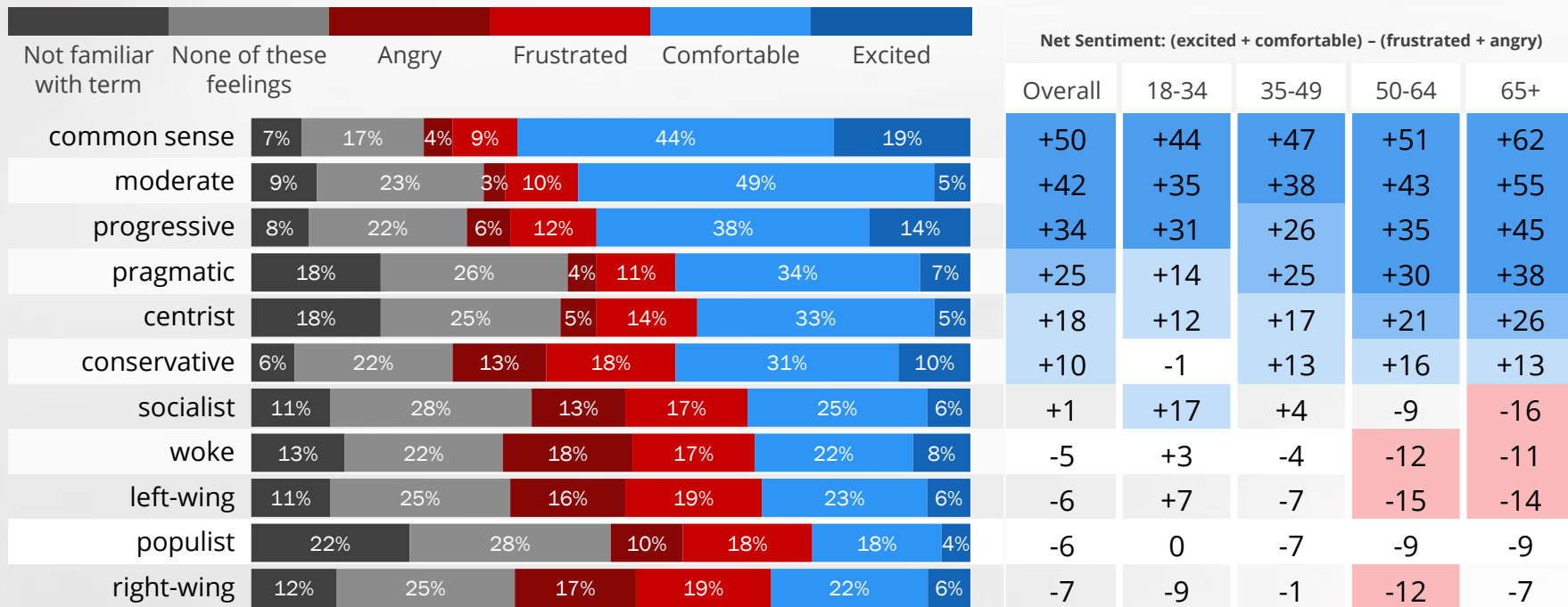
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Q The following are words people sometimes use to describe politicians. Generally speaking, how do you feel when you think about these types of politicians?
BASE: All Respondents (n=2,702)

Political Philosophies – by Age: Younger voters more open than seniors towards politicians who brand in more extreme terms

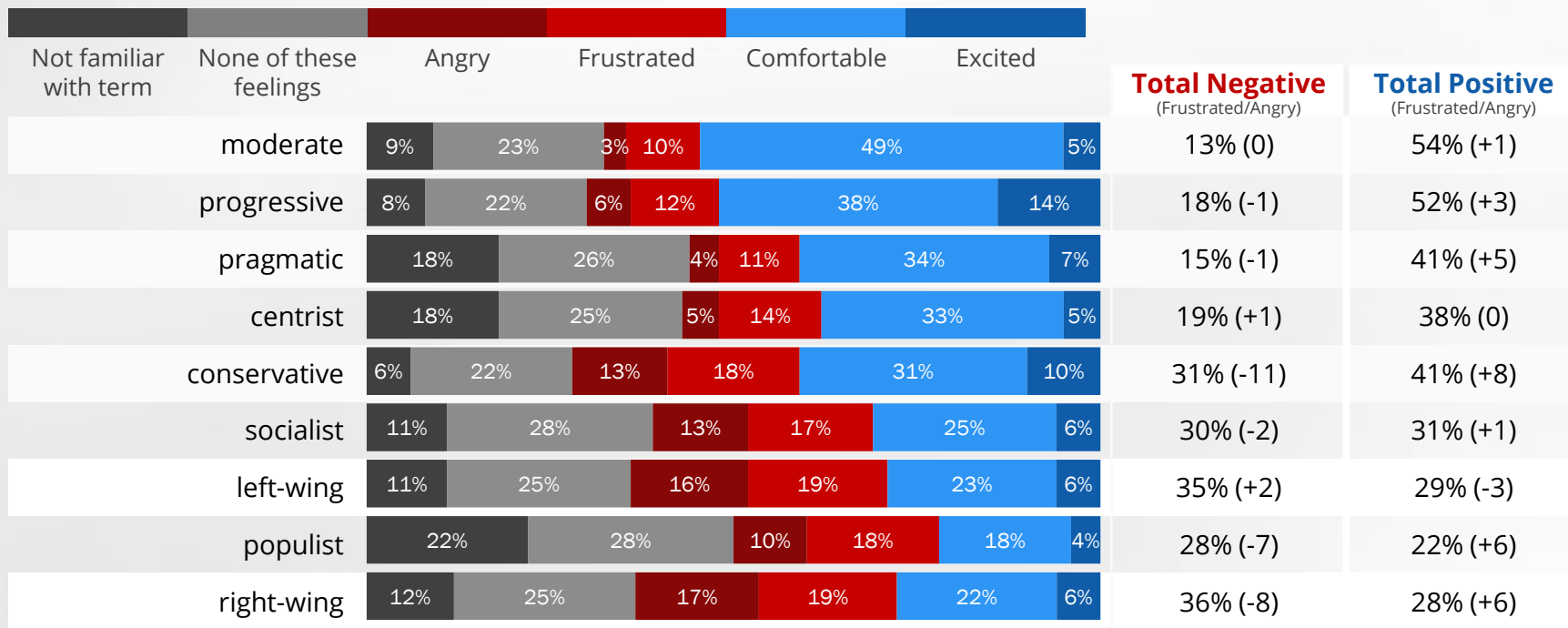
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Q The following are words people sometimes use to describe politicians. Generally speaking, how do you feel when you think about these types of politicians?
BASE: All Respondents (n=2,702)

Political Philosophies - Tracking: Growth in comfort with “conservative”, “populist”, and “right-wing” politicians

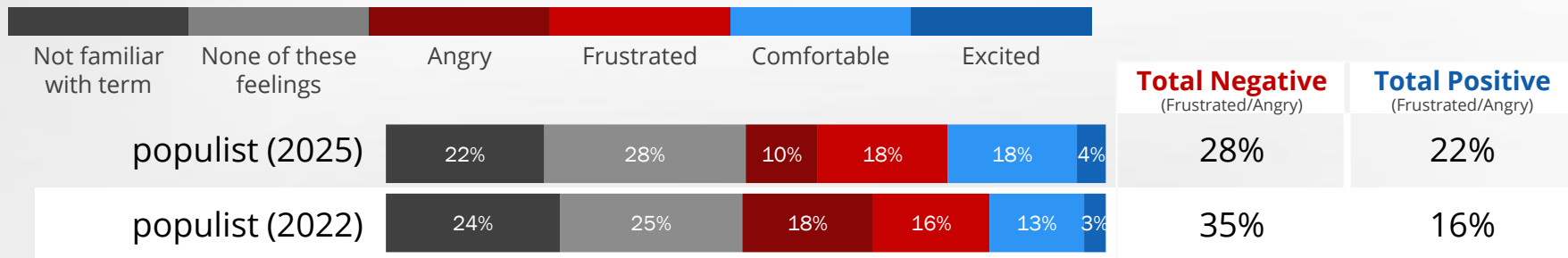
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Q The following are words people sometimes use to describe politicians. Generally speaking, how do you feel when you think about these types of politicians?
 BASE: All Respondents (n=2,702)

Feelings About Populism - Tracking: The *concept* of populism isn't any better understood than in 2022, but anger towards populists is on the decline

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	Lib	CPC	NDP	BQ	ATL	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
NET (2025)	-12	0	-4	-2	-4	-6	-7	-2	-7	-4	-9	-3	0	-7	-9	-9
NET (2022)	-19	-10	-24	-42	-21	-20	-19	-12	-21	-18	-24	-14	-13	-14	-19	-32

Q The following are words people sometimes use to describe politicians. Generally speaking, how do you feel when you think about these types of politicians?
 BASE: All Respondents (n=2,702)

Populist Principles: While Canadians do not resonate with the *term* “populist”, many of the beliefs that underpin it find wide appeal

	Disagree	Agree
The politicians in government need to follow the will of the people	11%	80%
Politicians cater more to the top 1% of income earners than the other 99%	19%	68%
Politicians should listen more to the people and less to the experts	23%	66%
Most politicians do not care about the people	26%	65%
The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions	28%	59%
What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles	26%	57%



Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
BASE: All Respondents (n=2,702)

Populist Principles – by Vote Intent: Even supporters of more progressive parties agree with many populist principles

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	% Agree			
	Lib	CPC	NDP	BQ
The politicians in government need to follow the will of the people	84%	88%	82%	81%
Politicians cater more to the top 1% of income earners than the other 99%	65%	75%	83%	73%
Politicians should listen more to the people and less to the experts	60%	80%	66%	64%
Most politicians do not care about the people	57%	78%	74%	64%
The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions	55%	70%	70%	53%
What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles	52%	69%	63%	55%



Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
BASE: All Respondents (n=2,702)



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